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***** THIS IS A COMBINED MESSAGE *****

BODY

COUNTRY: (U) SOUTH AFRICA (SF)

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SUBJ: SOUTH AFRICA--EX-NAVY COMMODORE
AND SOVIET SPY DIETER GERHARDT RELEASED BY SOUTH AFRICAN
GOVERNMENT (U)WARNING: (U) THIS IS AN INFO REPORT, NOT FINALLY
EVALUATED INTEL. REPORT IS CLASSIFIED CONFIDENTIAL NOFORN.

- DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

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DOI: (U) 920830.

SOURCE: A. (U) //OPEN//NEWSPAPER, "SATURDAY STAR" (U),
JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA, 920829, IN ENGLISH. NEWSPAPER
IS INDEPENDENT AND LIBERAL.B. (U) //OPEN//NEWSPAPER, "SUNDAY STAR" (U),
JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA, 920829, IN ENGLISH. NEWSPAPER
IS INDEPENDENT AND LIBERAL.C. (U) //OPEN//NEWSPAPER, "THE CITIZEN" (U),
JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA, 920829, IN ENGLISH. NEWSPAPER
IS CONSERVATIVE AND PRO-GOVERNMENT.

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SUMMARY: (U) REPORTS ON THE RELEASE OF EX-SA NAVY
COMMODORE AND SOVIET SPY DIETER GERHARDT FROM CUSTODY.
DISCUSSES POSSIBLE ROLE WITH ANC AND REACTION OF SA NAVY
PERSONNEL TO THE RELEASE.TEXT: 1. (U) SOURCE A REPORTS FREED SOVIET SPY DIETER
((GERHARDT)) ARRIVED IN SWITZERLAND ON 920828 FOR A
REUNION WITH HIS WIFE, RUTH, WHO HAD BEEN RELEASED FROM
SOUTH AFRICAN CUSTODY THREE YEARS EARLIER. THE COUPLE
WERE BOTH JAILED FOR HIGH TREASON AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA

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AFTER YEARS OF SPYING FOR THE KGB, GERHARDT, FORMER COMMANDER OF THE SIMONSTOWN NAVAL DOCKYARD, WAS FREED AT THE REQUEST OF RUSSIAN LEADER BORIS ((YELTSIN)).

-INTELLIGENCE SOURCES IN BRI TAIN DECLINED TO COMMENT ON THE RELEASE OF THE MAN SAID TO HAVE PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE IN PASSING WESTERN NAVAL SECRETS TO THE SOVIET UNION.

-ONE OF THE INVESTIGATING OFFICERS OF THE 1983 SPY CASE, AND RETIRED HEAD OF THE SAP INTELLIGENCE UNIT, HERMAN ((STADLER)), SAID HE WAS NOT DISTURBED BY THE RELEASE.

"HE HAS LEARNT HIS LESSON. HE SAT FOR ALMOST TEN YEARS AND CAN'T CAUSE ANY MORE DAMAGE." STADLER SAID GERHARDT'S SPYING CAREER BEGAN IN 1962 AFTER HE HAD REPEATEDLY ASKED THE SOVIET EMBASSY IN KENSINGTON GARDENS, LONDON, FOR A JOB AS AN AGENT. AT THE TIME HE WAS A JUNIOR OFFICER DOING A TRAINING SOURCE WITH THE ROYAL NAVY. STADLER SAID THE HIGHLY INTELLIGENT GERHARDT HAD EARNED MORE THAN R1 MILLION DURING HIS 20 YEAR EMPLOYMENT BY THE SOVIETS, BUT SPENT THE MONEY CAREFULLY SO THAT IT DID NOT ATTRACT ATTENTION. GERHARDT AND RUTH'S SON WAS NAMED GREGORY AFTER HIS SOVIET HANDLER.

2. (U) SOURCE B STATES SOVIET SPY DIETER GERHARDT, RELEASED THIS WEEK BY PRESIDENT F. W. ((DE KLERK)), COULD BE CALLED IN BY THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS TO PLAY A PART IN BUILDING THE NEW SOUTH AFRICA. GERHARDT'S SWISS WIFE, RUTH GERHARDT, SAID 920829 IN AN INTERVIEW THAT SHE WAS CONVINCED THEY WOULD RETURN TO SOUTH AFRICA AT SOME STAGE. THE ANC HAS ADMITTED THAT IT CONSULTED HIM ON MILITARY MATTERS EARLY THIS YEAR, DURING THE CODESA NEGOTIATIONS, WHILE HE WAS STILL IN PRISON. AN ANC SPOKESMAN SAID AT THE TIME, "GERHARDT HAS AN IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY IN THE RECONSTRUCTION AND DEMOCRATIZATION OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN DEFENSE FORCE. HE HAS A WEALTH OF KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE."

3. (C) SOURCE C, IN AN EDITORIAL REACTION TO GERHARDT'S RELEASE AND REPORTS THE ANC HAD FUTURE PLANS FOR HIM, SAYS THERE IS NOTHING IN GERHARDT'S CAREER AS A SPY TO JUSTIFY HIS BEING GIVEN HEROIC STATUS BY THE ANC. GERHARDT AND HIS WIFE WERE CONVICTED AND SENTENCED ON 831231 FOR HIGH TREASON, WHICH IS A CAPITAL OFFENSE, MEANING THEY COULD HAVE BEEN SENTENCED TO DEATH. INSTEAD, GERHARDT WAS SENTENCED TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT AND HIS WIFE TO 10 YEARS. GERHARDT, WHO AS A COMMODORE WAS OFFICER COMMANDING THE SIMONSTOWN NAVAL DOCKYARD, SPIED FOR THE SOVIET UNION FROM 1962 TO 1983, WHEN HE WAS CAUGHT. THE COURT REJECTED HIS CLAIM THAT HE WAS A DOUBLE AGENT WORKING FOR A COUNTRY NOT HOSTILE TO SOUTH AFRICA, AND THAT IT WAS THIS COUNTRY WHICH INSTRUCTED HIM TO OFFER HIS SERVICES TO THE USSR SO THAT THE COUNTRY IN QUESTION COULD ASCERTAIN THE INTEREST OF THE USSR IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. BECAUSE THE CASE WAS HELD IN CAMERA, IT IS NOT KNOWN WHAT MILITARY SECRETS HE GAVE THE SOVIET UNION. HOWEVER, INTELLIGENCE EXPERTS SAY HE

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WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR ONE OF THE MOST PAINFUL BLOWS TO THE WEST SINCE THE COLD WAR STARTED - A BETRAYAL OF IMPORTANT MILITARY AND STRATEGIC SECRETS FROM SOUTH AFRICA, BRITAIN AND NATO. THESE SECRETS RANGED FROM MISSILES SUCH AS THE EXOCET AND WEAPONS CONTROL SYSTEMS TO THE MONITORING OF VITAL SEA AND AIR ROUTES IN THE SOUTHERN ATLANTIC AND INDIAN OCEANS. ACCORDING TO AN EXPERT, HE WAS REGARDED AS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT RUSSIAN SPIES SINCE KIM ((PHILBY)).

(b)(1);Sec. 1.4
(b);Sec. 1.4(c);Sec.
1.4(d)

CLAIMS THAT HE HAD NEVER BEEN A COMMUNIST, MARXIST, A MEMBER OF THE ANC OR A PLAIN MERCENARY SPY. HE ALSO DENIES HE WAS PAID FOR HIS SPYING. HE TOLD A SUNDAY NEWSPAPER WHEN HIS PRO-NAZI FATHER, A GERMAN IMMIGRANT, WAS INTERRED DURING THE WAR, GERHARDT WAS INFLUENCED TO BECOME A HUMANIST AND THIS HAD DICTATED HIS LIFE. -AFTER HER RELEASE IN 1980, MRS. GERHARDT FLEW TO SWITZERLAND, WHERE SHE WAS SUBSEQUENTLY EMBRACED BY ANC PRESIDENT NELSON ((MANDELA)), WHO REGARDDED THE GERHARDTS AS ANTI-APARTHEID ACTIVISTS. MANDELA AND OTHER ANC LEADERS MET GERHARDT IN PRETORIA CENTRAL PRISON IN MAR 92, CONSULTING HIM ON MILITARY ASPECTS OF THE CODESA NEGOTIATIONS. THE EDITORIAL CONCLUDES BY SAYING, "WE DON'T SHARE THE ANC'S LOVE OF GERHARDT. HE IS A TRAITOR, A MAN WHO SOLD HIS COUNTRY'S SECRETS, AND THOSE OF OTHER COUNTRIES, TO THE SOVIET UNION - AND THAT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH BEING AGAINST APARTHEID."

(b)(1);Sec. 1.4(b);Sec. 1.4
(c);Sec. 1.4(d)

CHARACTERIZED DIETER GERHARDT AS A MAN WHO "...HAD THE ATTITUDE HE WAS SMARTER THAN EVERYONE ELSE", WHICH MADE HIM ALOOF FROM HIS CONTEMPORARIES AND DIFFICULT TO DEAL WITH. HOWEVER, HE HAD THE REPUTATION AS AN OFFICER COMMANDING WHO RAN A GOOD DOCKYARD AT SIMONSTOWN.

(b)(1);Sec. 1.4(b);Sec. 1.4
(c);Sec. 1.4(d)

DIETER

GERHARDT DID NOT HAVE AN IDEOLOGY, THAT HE OFFERED HIMSELF TO THE SOVIETS SEVERAL TIMES BEFORE THEY ACTUALLY MADE USE OF HIS SERVICES, AND THAT HE SIMPLY SOLD HIMSELF TO THE SOVIETS FOR WHAT THEY WOULD PAY HIM.

(b)(1);Sec. 1.4(b);Sec.
1.4(c);Sec. 1.4(d)

Page 6 withheld in full.

(b)(1);Sec. 1.4(b);Sec. 1.4
(c);Sec. 1.4(d)

THAT GERHARDT HAD NO IDEOLOGY, AND THAT HIS ANTI-APARTHEID ACTIVISM AND HIS JOINING OF THE ANC WAS BASED ONLY ON THE POSSIBILITY THAT THESE ACTIONS MIGHT GET HIM OUT OF JAIL.

(b)(1);Sec. 1.4(c);Sec. 1.4(d)

-FINALLY, [REDACTED] HE HOPED HE NEVER SAW DIETER GERHARDT ON THE STREET, BECAUSE, "...I WOULD BE FORCED TO TAKE A SWING AT HIM."

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(b)(1);(b)(3):10 USC
424;Sec. 1.4(b);Sec. 1.4
(c);Sec. 1.4(d)

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